(d) the recommendations of Experts Group in this regard and agenda of action finalised for 1997-98 and implications thereof; and

(e) the details of proposals for expansion of capacity/ modernisation/diversification, etc. pending clearance for over one year and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) The Government policies on PSUs are detailed in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and the Approach Paper to the Ninth Five Year Plan. In pursuance of the CMP of the Government, a Public Sector Disinvestment Commission was constituted in August, 1996 initially for a period of 3 years.

(c) The non-plan support is not extended to the PSUs merely to protect employment.

(d) The Planning Commission had set up a Working Group on Management of Public Sector Enterprises. Its Report will be considered for the Ninth Plan.

(e) No proposal for expansion of capacity/ modernisation/diversification etc. of any Central Public Sector Undertaking is pending clearance in the Planning Commission for over one year.

Performance of Research Institutes

4898. SHRI RAJABHAU THAKARE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the most outstanding research contribution of National Institutes on various crops during the last five years, crop-wise and Institute-wise;

(b) whether the Government have set up an Experts Committee to evaluate the performance of the National Research Institutes;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of steps taken during 1996-97 and proposed to be taken during 1997-98 to upgrade, diversity and modernise higher education in the wake of globalisation?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) Most outstanding research contributions of National Institutes on various crops during the last five years include aspects of collection, conservation and evaluation of indigenous and exotic germplasm; development of improved varieties/hybrid including those with resistance/tolerance of biotic/abiotic stresses and value-added crop varieties for export in general. Biotechnology-led development in crop improvement (Indian Agricultural Research Institute) development of region-specific IPM modules for various pest-intensive crops (National Centre for Integrated Pest Management. IARI, Central Institute for Cotton Research), and development of alternative technologies (like use to True Potato Seed in raising potato crop), Central Potato Research Institute and biopesticides (IARI, Central Tobacco Research Institute) on varietal development front some salient examples are: Improved varieties of Basmati rice (IARI), Hybrid rice (Dte of Rice Research). The area coverage under rice is around 50,000 ha. Replacement of susceptible varieties to wheat rust like HD 2329 and HD 2385 by UP 2338 in the North West Plan Zone and Sonalika by Sonali (IARI, Dte of Wheat Research); short duration hybrids in pigeonpea for Tamil Nadu and Punjab; short duration improved varieties of soybean almost doubling its area in last five years; improved hybrids in sunflower, castor and Gobhi sarson; powdery mildew and yellow mosaic virus resistant short duration varieties of blackgram and greengram etc. Accelerated efforts on breeder seed production by various institutes has led to effective expansion of improved varieties considerably.

(b) and (c) Quinquennial Review Teams for audit of research progress have been formed in general for different institutes, which is a routine procedure for every five-year period.

(d) Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi which deals with crops also imparts higher education. Modernization of Library, Development of Agricultural Information System, and establishment/strengthening of Centres of Excellence and Schools of thoughts in priority areas are undertaken/contemplated.

[Translation]

Irregularities in Payment of Subsidy

4899. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the irregularities being committed in the subsidy being provided to farmers in the agriculture sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (c) No irregularities in the provision of subsidies to farmers have been brought to the notice of the Government in respect of Central/Cetrally Sponsored Schemes

implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation.

[Translation]

Biotechnology for Farmers

4900. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Biotechnology of India is under the control of multinational companies and which is not in the interests of farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that the benefits of Bio-technology reaches to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) No Sir.

(c) The Department of Biotechnology is implementing a number of programmes for the benefit of farmers. These are : Biofertilizers, Biocontrol agents, Sericulture, Aquaculture, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Use of Embroy transfer technology, etc. Special biotechnology based programmes for SC/ST are focussed for target groups. Training, employment generation activities, awareness and education, large scale demonstration in the farmers field and health interventions are all aimed at ensuring the benefits of biotechnology for the farmers.

[English]

Land Fertility

4901. SHRI B.L. SHANKAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether excessive use of chemicals and fertilizers reduces the fertility of land;

(b) if so, whether foreign countries have curtailed the use of chemicals and fertilizers to maintain the fertility of land;

(c) whether the Government have made or propose to make any study in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) Excessive use of fertilizers may lead to imbalance of nutrients in the soil. Consumption of fertilizer nutrients being about 75 kg. per ha. in India cannot be termed as excessive use. With regard to chemical pesticides also there are no reports about their reducing the fertility of the land.

(b) The fertilizer consumption in the World has declined during past few years. Increase in the cost and environmental considerations are among important reasons for the declining trend. With regard to chemical pesticides, however, there is no decline in the consumption.

(c) to (e) In view of the above, no study has been instituted in this regard.

Safety of Yamuna Water

4902. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the report of the Washington based International Food Policy Research Institute as published in the 'Hindustan Times', dated March 10, 1997 to the effect that Yamuna water in Delhi is dangerously polluted containing caliform count of 25 million organism per 100 millilitres and that Yamuna water leaving New Delhi received 200 million litres of untreated sewage water per day;

(b) if so, the Government's independent assessment about safety of Yamuna water for the National Capital region; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken for supplying safe drinking water to people in the capital?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Yes, Sir. According to investigations carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board, the average coliform count in the Yamuna water along Delhi is around 3.5 lakhs per 100 millilitres. This is due to the discharge of untreated/partially treated sewage of Delhi.

(b) The Yamuna water will be safe only if all the sewage generated from Delhi is fully treated to the discharge standards prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board and a minimum flow is maintained in the river to dilute the effect of pollution.

(c) In order to provide potable water to the people of Delhi, raw water from the river Yamuna is drawn for treatment upstream of the Wazirabad Barrage which is not polluted. The drinking water supplied to the people of Delhi by the Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking of the Government of National Capital Territory